



Toumba, Thessaloniki: prehistoric settlement - Τούμπα, Θεσσαλονίκη: προϊστορικός οικισμός.

MACEDONIA

4 . 0 0 0 Y E A R S O F G R E E K C I V I L I Z A T I O N

MADEDONIA AND THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION

A brief survey

European family in the course of the 5th millennium - spread throughout the area known today as northern Greece. During the early centuries of the second millennium B.C. three basic groups can already be distinguished:

(a) The South - Eastern group made up of Ionians.

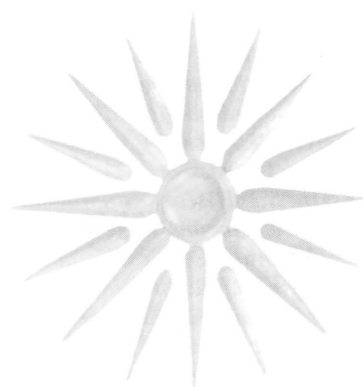
(b) The Eastern group with its two linguistic subgroups, one speaking the Arcadian and one the Aeolian Greek dialect.

(c) The Western group, mainly composed of the populous tribe of the Makednoi.

With the Ionians leading the way and the Aeolic - speaking tribes (Achaians, Lapithes, Minoans et. al.) following suit, a steady southward expansion of all these proto - hellenic peoples can be observed as centuries go by. Their migration brought them into contact with the pre-hellenic tribes in the south such as the Cretans, an insular people who had evolved a sophisticated culture.

The Western group, i.e. the Makednoi were numerous enough to follow four

separate paths of expansion. One group pushed southwards towards Sterea (mainland) Greece and the Peloponnesus. A second settled in the region of Doris where it merged with the local population to produce the Dorians. A third group made its way to Thessaly, whilst a fourth, calling themselves-Μακεδόνες (Makedonians), settled in the region known to these days as Western, Southern and Central Greek Macedonia. The Makedonians - speaking a Greek dialect as did all the other tribes originating from the Makednoi - remained, for a few centuries, outside the mainstream of Hellenic culture because, unlike their kinsmen, they never ventured southward and thus did not come into early contact with the Creto - insular population. By the 8th century B.C., however, the Macedonians are drawn even more closely to the rest of the Greek World. Orestis (the region known today as Kastoria) is mentioned as early as the 7th century as the birthplace of the Macedonian dynasty of the Argeads and Temenids. Argos is, of course, the name of a city in Makedonia which to this day is called Argos Orestikon to distinguish it

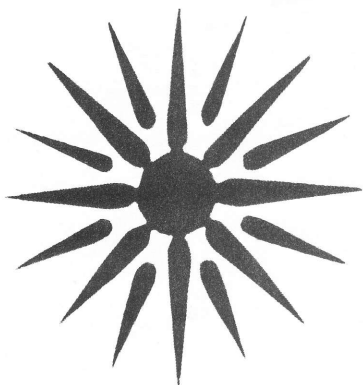


I. Macedonia in history

Macedonia in Antiquity

Historical and archaeological evidence points to the existence of Greek - speaking inhabitants occupying the rugged northern slopes of Pindos mountain as early as 2200 - 2100 B.C. These Greek tribes - thought to have split from the main bulk of the Indo -

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from its rather better known Peloponnesian namesake. The fact that the same name, Argos, appears in antiquity in places as far apart as Macedonia and the Peloponnesus is one more piece of evidence showing how much these ancient Greek tribes had in common.

During the 7th and 6th centuries the Macedonians pushed eastwards of Orestis and populated the provinces of Pieria, Vottiaea (region of mount Vermion), Eordea and Almopia. They crossed the river Axios and stepped into Chalkidiki either driving away or assimilating the indigenous tribes already established there (such as the Pelasgians).

From at least the 5th century onwards the isolation of the Macedonians starts to be broken down as the more sophisticated South begins - through better sea and land transport - to infiltrate the region by setting up colonies in Chalkidiki.

During the reign of Amyntas, Philip II and Alexander the Great, the Macedonian revival is at its highest point. The fact that the ancient Macedonians belonged to the world of the Hellenes is hardly disputed by scholars. Recent archaeological finds, in conjunction with linguistic analyses, the discovery of scores of new inscriptions with Greek personal and place names, the diffusion of Greek language and culture throughout the then known world by Alexander the Great and the Macedonians, establish the continuity of Greek culture in time and the strong bonds uniting the Macedonians to other Greeks geographically. The latest finds at Vergina and Dion fully corroborate this view.

Macedonia under the Romans

Macedonia, as a geographical entity, retained its Hellenic characteristics during

the reign of the Epigones (i.e. Alexander's successors) and fostered the creation of many city - states governed for almost two centuries by Macedonian kings. It was only after the decisive battle of Pydna in 168 B.C. that Macedonia finally fell to the Romans and was subsequently divided into four administrative regions.

Under the Roman occupation the Macedonian provinces thrived and attracted new settlers from the East and from Italy, while Jewish communities made their appearance for the first time. Inscriptions show, however, that as far as language is concerned most of these settlers were gradually Hellenized.

During the 3rd century A.D., attacks by Goths and other kindred tribes were successfully repelled. The invaders left no ethnic trace in Macedonia. In 324 A.D. the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire was transferred to Byzantium, a fact which has a significant impact on Macedonia in general and on its capital city Thessaloniki in particular, as it gradually developed to become the second most important city of the Byzantine Empire.

Macedonia in the Byzantine era. Descent of Slavs.

With the exception of some Latin and other tribal settlements, the basically Greek population of Macedonia remained more or less unchanged up to the 7th century A.D. when various Slav tribes (Dragouvitae, Strymonitae, Sagouditae et. al.) began settling in the Macedonian region. By permission of the Byzantine authorities these tribes set up small Slavic enclaves known to the Byzantines as "Sclaninae". Throughout the 7th century the Slavs continually fought against the Byzantine authorities and repeatedly attacked - without success - the city of Thessaloniki. In 688, Emperor Justinian II defeated them in a decisive battle and deported many of them to Bithynia in Asia Minor. For a considerable period of time after this, the Slavs lived at peace with their environment while many of them were Hellenized.

In the following centuries the Slavs themselves came under threat when, various Finnish - Tataric tribes, collectively known as Proto - Bulgarians, began, in turn, to infiltrate the Balkan peninsula and subjugate the Slavs in the territories which make up today's Bulgaria. These tribes were soon linguistically assimilated by the Slavs and the resulting mixture produced the "Bulgarians"

who established the medieval Bulgarian State. One ought to mention at this point that there is considerable controversy amongst scholars as to the extent to which the Slavs, who settled in Macedonian territories were "Bulgarised". Historians from Skopje Yugoslavia for instance, maintain that there were no Bulgarians in Macedonia during the Middle Ages, that Samuel was a Slav - Macedonian King who fought against both Byzantines and Bulgarians. Byzantine sources, however, reveal that Samuel's kingdom in the 10th century was multi - national in essence, extending over Bulgaria and other regions further northwards and southwards.

In any case, whatever its precise ethnic identity, the fact remains that Samuel's kingdom, in spite of its dynamism, did not abolish Byzantine suzerainty in Macedonia and did not significantly alter its ethnological composition. The large population centres, still thriving in Greek Macedonia, had remained solidly and continuously Greek. In the countryside, on the other hand, especially in Northern Macedonia - i.e. in the territories shared today between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, and in certain areas further to the south - the Slavic element seemed to be much better entrenched. Nevertheless the annihilation of the Bulgarian kingdom by the Byzantine Emperor Vassilios II Voulgaroktonos ("The Slayer of Bulgars") in the 11th century, marked a Hellenic revival in the whole area.

During the 14th century, the Serbian empire of Ducan encompassed Macedonia. However, this short - lived Empire, which preceded the Ottoman occupation of the Balkans, did not substantially alter the ethnic composition of the population of Macedonia, as Professor A. Vakalopoulos explains in his History of Macedonia. Serbian rule left in this wake a few more Slavic enclaves along with tales of a great, albeit transient, empire. One should add here that such somewhat hazy memories of past grandeur were instrumental in fomenting the nationalistic and irredentist awakening of the Serbian nation during the 19th century and in the formulation of its claims on Macedonia.

It must be pointed out at this juncture that in Byzantine as well as in Ottoman times the meaning of the term Macedonia had altered somewhat. Byzantine authors used Macedonia as a blanket term to cover the greater part of Albania, Northern Thrace (Eastern Rumelia) as well as areas belonging to Western (i.e. today Greek) Thrace. So, to

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be a "Macedonian" was not only a meaningless term in the ethnic sense; it had also gradually lost some of its former geographic connotation. The "Macedonian Dynasty" of Byzantine Emperors for instance included sovereigns coming from Thrace.

Macedonia under Ottoman rule

The Ottoman rule in the 15th century brought about great changes in the population of the Balkans in general and of Macedonia in particular. Roughly speaking, the Christians took to the mountains, the elite took to the West. Those unable to cope with the harshness of Ottoman rule and the humiliations reserved for non-Muslims took to Islam. These Greek-speaking Muslims, known as Valaads, were to be found in certain parts of the Kozani region, as recently as 1912, when Macedonia was liberated. On the other hand Turkomans (Yuruks) were brought in by the Ottomans to settle the depopulated region in Central Macedonia.

From the 17th century onwards the situation stabilized somewhat and the Christians returned to the plains from the mountains. One must not forget, in this context, that the vast Ottoman Empire was continually criss-crossed by population movements. To quote from Professor Vakalopoulos History of Macedonia (page 7):

"Muslims and Christians have the chance to move freely in every direction towards and within Macedonia, to intermarry and fuse with the local inhabitants, creating new settlements, new ways of life and new problems. While Turks are coming and settling in various parts of West, Central and East Macedonia, Greeks of Thessaly and particularly of Macedonia end Epirus, are moving and advancing peacefully towards the North, to Serbia, Austria and Hungary, to Bulgaria and Romania, creating Greek communities in their cities, establishing country-towns and villages or strengthening very old (Greek) population nuclei ... Southern Slavs and particularly Bulgarians, descending south in search of employment, revive, in certain parts of Macedonia old remnants of Slavic settlements dating from the Middle Ages, or create new settlements for themselves".

The Slavic element is thus strengthened while the Slavic-Bulgarian language gains ground both in the North (i.e. in what is today Yugoslav Macedonia) and in the central region. However as of the 18th century, Greek ascendancy in the economic, social and educational fields turned Greek into the

dominant culture in the area. Drawing support, guidance and moral sustenance from the Greek clergy, masses of Christians in Macedonia became aware of their Greek identity. Many Slav-speaking Christians sent their children to Greek schools, fought against the Ottomans during the Greek war of liberation, and joined the Greek revolutionary movements of Macedonia in the 19th century, fighting for the union of Macedonia with the free Greek State.

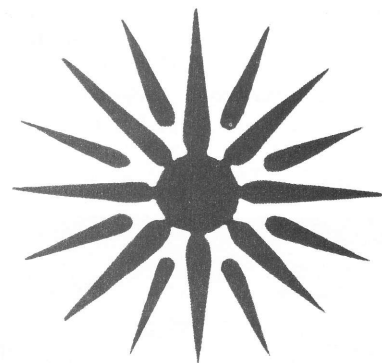
Greco-Slavic rivalry in Macedonia

The establishment of the independent Bulgarian church, called the Exarchate, in 1870, marked the beginning of a struggle between Greeks and Bulgarians, with Macedonia as the coveted apple of discord. In effect, the struggle consisted of each side trying to ascertain the national identity of the slavophone masses living in the central region.

In the aftermath of Greece's defeat in the 1897 war against Turkey, Bulgaria managed to enlist the support of a great many Slavophones. In the summer of 1903, during the religious festival of the Prophet Elias an uprising - appropriately named "Iliden" - broke out with disastrous consequences. The Ottoman army suppressed the rebellion in a bloodbath and in the process destroyed many Greek communities and towns including Krushovo in Northern Macedonia. Greeks came under great pressure in Macedonia.

In 1904, they responded by organising armed bands of Greek Macedonians, whose struggle against the Turks and Bulgarians lasted until 1908. Armed detachments of volunteers from the free Greek state, from Crete and other regions still under the Ottoman yoke, were formed, trained, armed and sent to help the indigenous Greeks of Macedonia in their struggle. It is interesting to note that in most regions, the Greek bands were composed of Slavophones, fighting for the Hellenic cause. For their Greek national consciousness, they were labeled by the Bulgarians "Grecomans", meaning "fanatic Greeks". Such a mobilisation was effective in counteracting the Bulgarian expansionary schemes in the area and managed to preserve Greek ascendancy in Southern and Central Macedonia until the liberation of the whole region during the Balkan wars.

At the height of the Greco-Bulgarian conflict in Macedonia both sides published their own statistics of the ethnic composition of the population of Macedonia, employing



different criteria in an effort to promote their respective national goals. Use of the local slavonic idiom was the Bulgarians' basic criterion for distinguishing between the two main ethnic groups. National consciousness and affiliation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople was the factor that counted for the Greek enumerators. The most objective estimates can be obtained by looking at the statistics compiled by the common Ottoman oppressor, who had no particular axe to grind and played no favours to either of the two rival ethnic groups in Macedonia. The Ottoman census carried out by Governor Hilmi Pasha (1904) gave the following results:

	Greeks	Bulgarians
Vil. of Thessaloniki	373,227	207,317
Vil. of Monastir	261,283	178,412
	643,500	385,729

Ethnological change in Greek Macedonia

The Balkan wars (1912 - 1913) gave Greece the major part of the Thessaloniki and Monastir (Bitola) vilayets (with the exception of certain northern provinces which now belong to Yugoslav and Bulgarian Macedonia). More precisely the Macedonian regions were apportioned as follows:

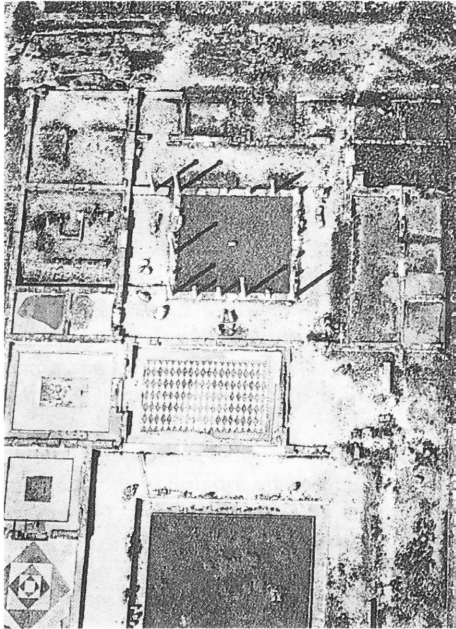
Greek Macedonia	34,603 sq. km	51.57%
Yugoslav Macedonia	25,714 sq. km	38.32%
Bulgarian Macedonia	6,789 sq. km	10.11%

During the next 10 - 15 years (1913 - 1925) the ethnological map of Macedonia became almost unrecognisable. While the wars lasted (1912 - 19), tens of thousands of Bulgarians departed from Macedonia. Another 53,000 Bulgarians left in the 'twenties, as a result of a voluntary exchange of populations between Greece and Bulgaria,

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which was foreseen by the Treaty of Neuilly. Only the Slavophones of Western Macedonia stayed behind as most of them considered themselves to be Greeks. At the same time following the Greco - Turkish exchange, over 700.000 Greeks from Turkey established themselves in Greek Macedonia.

In 1926, after the exchange of



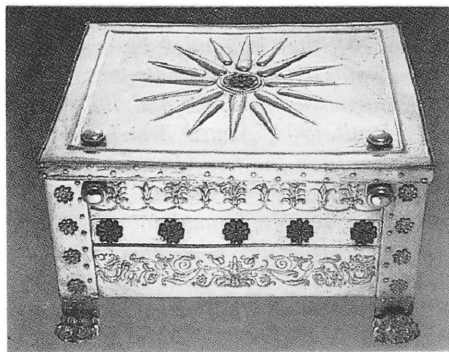
Pella, which has been inhabited continuously from the prehistoric years with the name Bounomeia lies by the foot of two hills. The city was first called Pella by Herodotus. Its important geographical position, near the mouth of the river Axios, was recognized by king Archelaos (413-399 B.C.), patron of the arts, progressive and well known to all Greeks, who moved there from Aigai the capital of Macedonia. In Pella, Archelaos brought together great artists in his court, among them the great painter Zeuxis and the tragic poet Euripides. It became the birthplace of Philip II and his son Alexander the Great. This is the city where, after Philip's exhortations, the great philosopher Aristotle came and taught politics and philosophy to Alexander the Great. Philip II, under whose reign Pella became the center of Hellenism, was an exciting personality and his ascent to the throne of Macedonia opened new roads in Greek history.

This important king was a great soldier and, mainly, an incomparable diplomat, one of the best of all ages. The excavations have brought to light the city of Pella of the hellenistic years, with straight streets and water - supply and sewage systems, laid out under the Hippodamean system, like the city of Olynthos in Chalkidiki. The forum of Pella occupied an area as large as other ancient cities and had shops and workshops. The hellenistic two - storey houses, with courtyards flanked by columns, and colorful mosaic decorated floors, are spectacular.

populations was completed, the League of Nations produced the following statistical data pertaining to Greek Macedonia:

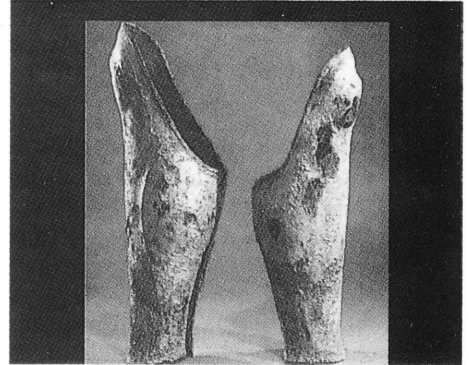
Greeks	1,341,000	88.8%
Muslims	2,000	0.1%
Bulgarians	77,000	5.1%
Miscellaneous (Jews)	91,000	6.0%
	1,511,000	100.0%

Two years earlier, in 1924, Greece and Bulgaria signed a protocol within the framework of the League of Nations known as the Protocol of Kalvov - Politis. Under its terms Greece was to recognise the Slavophone populations within her borders as Bulgarian. Serbia which, in the meantime had recognized the Slav inhabitants of her part of Macedonia, as Serbs, was strongly opposed to Greece's initiative to confer Bulgarian ethnic identity to the slav - speaking inhabitants just south of the Serbian border. To show her disagreement, Serbia immediately retaliated by declaring the Greco - Serbian alliance pact of 1913 null and void. Meanwhile, public outcry against this protocol within Greece itself - especially by slavophone border communities in Macedonia - reached such proportions that the Greek parliament refused to ratify it. The League of Nations accepted this decision, and the Protocol never became a binding agreement. Since then, Greece considered the remaining Slav - speaking inhabitants as



It is well known that the ancient Greeks placed in the tombs of their dead many items, which they believed would be essential to them in the next life.

This explains the presence of offerings of great value made from many materials in the royal tombs of Vergina. The solid gold larnax, shaped like a small wooden box, was found placed in a marble sarcophagus, and is decorated with the sixteen - pointed Macedonian Star, symbol of the Macedonian Dynasty. The opening of the larnax recalled to those present Homer's description of the burial of Hector: the bones of the deceased and a precious golden wreath with oak leaves and acorns.



The iron cuirass is unique, as it is only example to have such brilliant gold decoration on all sides. So is a pair of gilded bronze greaves, which are of different size and shape, implying that the deceased was lame, and thus proving that the tomb belongs to Philip II.

Slavophone Greeks, and this was accepted with relief by their vast majority, as their national consciousness was Greek irrespective of their vernacular.

A few years later (1927) a new Greek - Bulgarian accord settled all outstanding economic issues arising from the mass population exchanges. Thus, so far as Greek Macedonia was concerned, there was no serious problem left, apart from Bulgaria's irredentism which still sought an opportunity to stake once again claims on Greek and Serbian Yugoslavian - Macedonia.

It was only during the Second World War that these claims took a concrete form, with the occupation of part of Greek Macedonia and Thrace by the Bulgarian army, already Hitler's loyal ally in the Balkans. As for the Slavophones, a number of them went through an identity crisis. While most remained firmly attached to Hellenism, others joined the Bulgarian and Nazi

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occupation authorities and persecuted their compatriots. With the defeat of Nazi Germany, these collaborators deserted the Bulgarian camp, and joined the adherents of the "Macedonian" policy initiated by the new Yugoslav regime. Thus, overnight, in a chameleon transformation, Bulgarian fascist collaborators turned into Yugoslav "Macedonian" communists.

II. Special issues

On the "Macedonian Question"

The Macedonian Question in our days is a political dispute between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria in which Greece is only indirectly involved. The fact that Yugoslavia does try to involve Greece by raising the issue of a non-existent minority should be attributed mainly to Belgrade's tactical maneuvering and has nothing to do with present realities in Greek Macedonia. Yugoslavia's occasional criticisms of Greece could be interpreted as an evenly balanced policy towards all occupiers of "Macedonians", be they Bulgarians, Greeks or Albanians. In

addition to this, the need to counteract internal centrifugal trends in a country with so many nationalities, makes it imperative for Belgrade to be seen to cater openly and publicly for each one's particular national aspirations. Certainly in so doing, it often give Greece good cause for offence. Fully aware of these internal problems and motives, the Greek side refrains, as best as it can, from aggravating the situation by indulging in public invective, unless openly provoked.

On the "Macedonian nation"

As already mentioned, the Greeks do not recognize that a "Macedonian nation" has been in existence for 13 centuries (sic), as the Yugoslavs claim. In taking this attitude they are consistent with history as there is no source either in the Byzantine era or during the Ottoman rule that has ever mentioned the existence of such a nation. It is well known, that Byzantine Emperor Vassilios II has been called the "Slayer of Bulgars" (Voulgaroktonos) and not the "Slayer of Macedonians". This is historical fact and cannot be disputed. On the other hand, various travellers, as well as foreign consuls of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, frequently mention in their reports Bulgarians or Slavs. There is no mention of ethnic "Macedonians" whatsoever. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, during the Greek - Bulgarian struggle for predominance in the still Ottoman - held Macedonia, there was, of course, mention of Macedonians but only in the sense that they (Bulgarians or Greeks) were inhabitants of Macedonia.

The conflict that occurred in the period of this struggle (1904 - 1908) among the various organisations - i.e. the Verhovists, who were guided by the government of Sofia and were seeking the integration of Macedonia in Bulgaria; and the "Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation" (IMRO), who advocated the creation of an autonomous Macedonian State - was not a conflict between Bulgarians and "Macedonians", but between unionist and autonomist Bulgarians. In other words, it was a debate similar to the one that was raised during the Cretan and Cypriot struggles for liberation between supporters of enosis on the one hand and self-government or independence on the other, respectively. As no one could attribute a separate Cretan or Cypriot national identity to the advocates of autonomy or independence, so no one could think of acknowledging separate "Macedonian" national consciousness to the

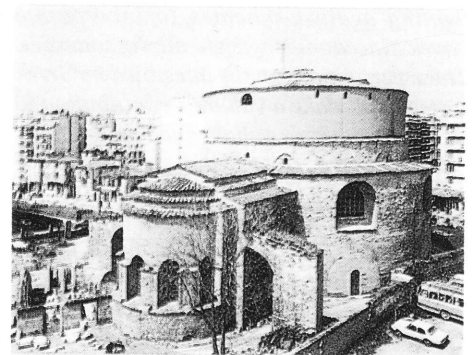


Thessaloniki: Statue of Octavian Augustus 27 BC - AD 14

followers of IMRO. During the period between the two World Wars, the communist parties of the Balkans spoke of the existence of "Macedonian" and "Thracian" peoples, but without a consistent set of arguments as to the distinctive national identity of these

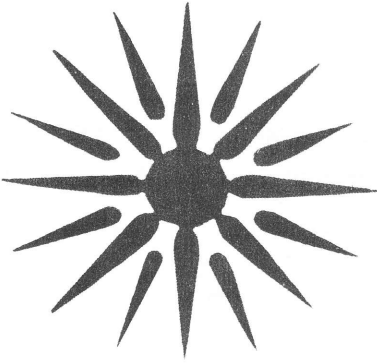


From the tomb of the Great Tumulus of Vergina, there is one more testimony that Macedonia was part of Greece. There are 47 marble grave stelai of the 5th, 4th, and 3rd century B.C., which decorated the tombs of common Macedonian citizens, with Greek names.



In the 5th century A.D., the building of the Rotunda, which was originally a sanctuary of Zeus, was converted into a church and was decorated with mosaics which are among the best examples of early - christian art. In 860 A.D., the monks Cyril and Methodius, natives of Thessaloniki, translated the Holy Bible to the slavic language, creating at the same time the slavic alphabet, and went on to convert the slaves to Christianity.

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"peoples". The proof of this is that the "Thracian people" were never heard of again after World War II.

On the "Macedonian minority" in Greece

The concept of a "Macedonian" minority in Greece is a difficult one to grasp. It is indisputable that in the past there have been in Greece persons considering themselves to be Slavs, who declared themselves now as Bulgarians and now as Slav - Macedonians. After the Nazi occupation and the ensuing civil war these persons took refuge mainly in Yugoslavia. Once there, they were thoroughly indoctrinated in the new ethnic "ideology" and as a result they identified themselves with the local Slav population. In addition, a number of Slav - conscious Greek citizens, who did not flee to Yugoslavia emigrated to various overseas countries. Certain bilingual persons who chose to remain in Greece distinguished themselves as Greek patriots fighting against schemes to incorporate Greek Macedonia to neighbouring countries. These persons are totally integrated in Greek society and make a valuable contribution to the Greek nation's welfare and development. During the last 30 years, better communications and transport, improvements in education and rapid urbanisation, together with a much higher standard of living have dramatically reduced bilingualism. What does happen now is that Greeks in Northern Greece, active in the tourist business, are learning not just English, German or French, but also the various languages of Yugoslavia in order to cope with the unending flow of tourists coming to Greece from their neighbouring country.

On the "Macedonian language"

Until the Second World War, there was no such thing as a "Macedonian" language.

The language spoken by the Slav - speaking inhabitants of northern Macedonia - i.e. regions of southern Yugoslavia and SW Bulgaria - was always considered to be a Bulgarian dialect. In regions bordering Albania, or in the northern border zone of Greece, it took the form of a local idiom replete with Albanian and Greek words, respectively. It was a spoken idiom with a poor vocabulary and no grammar or syntax. Indeed, the influence of Greek was such that Slavophone inhabitants in pre - war Greek Macedonia, could hardly understand natives of Sofia or Skopje.

After the war, however, when the "Socialist Republic of Macedonia" was set up in Yugoslavia, the new regime there, made an all out effort, to raise the local dialect to the rank of a respectable language. Swarms of linguists, philologist and other such scholars converged in Skopje and set out first, to break off any lingering bonds between the language of Yugoslav Macedonians and Bulgarian. Their next step was to create a separate written language founded on the dialect spoken in central Yugoslav Macedonia as well as on massive borrowings from Serbian, Russian and other Slav languages. The language thus constructed was christened "literary Macedonian" and so sooner was it launched than it was recognized in the Yugoslav constitution as one of the three official languages of the Federation.

Literary "Macedonian", however, has not managed to shake off, convincingly the Bulgarian connection. What it has done, is to become even less comprehensible to the few ageing Slavophones still living in the border areas and still able to speak their rather poor local Greco - Slav idiom.

On "Macedonian history"

Yugoslav scholars have completely rewritten the history of Macedonia. By totally ignoring all factual evidence and all objective interpretations of such evidence, they have endowed their newly constructed nation with traditions, a culture, and a history appropriated from their neighbouring nations.

Their theory that the ancient Macedonians were not Greek is not the outcome of a scientific reassessment of existing evidence but merely a tool to promote Macedonian separateness even at that remote era. It flies in the face of recent finds in Vergina and Dion of scores of tombstones all of which bear Greek names. These tombstones, for instance, provide strong evidence of the hellenic origins of the

Macedonians, as it proves that even ordinary people not in any way connected with the royal family or the so - called "hellenised elite", bore ordinary Greek names like any citizen of Athens, Thebes or Sparta. As pointed out before, with the passage of time almost a millennium later, Slavs did settle in Macedonia eventually, but there has been no vidence whatsoever during the Byzantine Empire or later during the Ottoman Empire that any of these Slavs in any way merited singling out as a separate group and still less being labelled "Macedonians". Greek historians support the view of most foreign scholars that such Slavs as lived in Macedonia in the 19th and early 20th centuries considered themselves to be Bulgarians as a rule.

Macedonia: A geographical term

The area covered by present - day Yugoslav Macedonia can lay no valid claim to the use of the term Macedonia even as a purely geographical term. With the exception of a narrow strip, less than a hundred kilometers wide beyond the Greek border, this area was never part of ancient Macedonia. It would be historically more accurate to call this region Dardania. This argument is historically valid but it has lost much of its potency since, during the Otoman period, the whole area as far north as Shar (Scardus) mountain (i.e. north of Skopje) became popularly - although unscientifically - known as Macedonia. Today, after Macedonia's liberation from the Turks in 1912 - 1913, the southern part equivalent to 51% of the whole constitute the region of Greek Macedonia. Approximately 39% belongs to Yugoslavia and, since 1944, constitutes the S. Rep. of Macedonia. Bulgaria hold the remaining 10%. The Greeks take offence when the Yugoslavs peddle the notion of Macedonia not only as a national, historical and geographical entity, but a trisected one, known under the regional names "Vardar Macedonia" (Yugoslav) "Aegean Macedonia" (Greek) and "Pirin Macedonia" (Bulgarian). In the Greek view, "Greek Macedonia", "Yugoslav Macedonia" and "Bulgarian Macedonia" are more appropriate terms, as they clearly denote each region's identification with the state to which each belongs. The obstinate insistence on newlycoined terms which aim to show the unity of the geographical area of Macedonia and the temporary state of its "dismemberment", shake mutual confidence among neighbours, and revive suspicions about old - fashioned territorial pretentions.

